

## A STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF KOLLAM AS A TOURISM DESTINATION AND FACTORS ATTRACTED BY THE TOURISTS TO VISIT KOLLAM DISTRICT IN KERALA

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### Abstract

Tourism industry is a booming industry that enriches knowledge, brings social development and economic growth. In India, one state that performed remarkably well in tourism is Kerala. Kerala, "god's own country", has emerged as the most acclaimed tourist destinations in the country. Tourism contributes about 10 per cent of the state's GDP and reportedly contributes around 23.5 per cent to the total employment in the state. Kollam (a district in Kerala) tourism agenda promotes ecologically sustained tourism which focuses on the local culture, wilderness adventures, volunteering and personal growth of the local population. Efforts are taken to minimize the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. The study will point out some suggestions or the emergence of Kollam as a prominent tourism destination. It will enable the authorities to take necessary actions for the development of Kollam as a tourist destination.

**Key words:-** Tourism, Economic Development, District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC), God's Own Country

Tourism has an important role in the development of any economy and has become a major workforce in global trade. It has been making a revolutionary and significant impact on the world economic scenario. Kerala is one of the most popular tourist destinations in India, named as one of the ten

paradises of the world by national geographic traveler. Kerala is famous especially for its ecotourism initiatives and beautiful backwaters. Its unique culture and tradition, coupled with its varied demography, have made Kerala one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.

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Tourism industry is one of the major contributors to the state's economy. One of the leading trade capitals of old world, Kollam is the center of the country's cashew trading and processing industry. Extolled by Macro Polo and Ibn Battuta in glowing terms, this famous port was once part of the international spice trade. Thirty per cent of this historic town is covered by the Ashtamudi Lake, making the gateway of the magnificent backwaters of Kerala. The momentous decision to introduce a new Malayalam era was convened at Kollam and hence the Malayalam calendar came to be known as 'kollavarsham'.

The district Kollam is blessed with numerous beautiful picnic spots, mini hill stations and scenic plantation sites which are yet to be developed and showcased for tourism purpose. There are number of little-known places interest in the region. The internal trade occurred through the Punalur pass connecting the ancient town to Tamilnadu. The district has a cross section of Kerala's natural attributes; it is endowed with along cost line a major Arabian Sea port and land lake. Kollam is the capital of Kerala's cashew industry. Ashtamudi lake is considered to be the southern gateway to the backwaters of Kerala and is prominent tourist destinations in Kollam.

All the islands in Kollam are situated in Ashtamudi Lake; Munroe island and Chavara Thekkumbhagam are the most important among these islands. Islands are the eye-catching factors as well as the beauty of Ashtamudi Lake. An old saying in Kerala is "Kollam kandavanillam Venda"-the spectator means that spectator

gets mesmerized by the glamour of the town that he doesn't returns to his home. Kollam has offered a variety of activities and spots.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To evaluate whether Kollam shall emerge as a prominent tourism destination in Kerala.
- To identify the attractions of tourist to visit Kollam.
- To identify the factors contributing to the economic development in tourism.
- To identify the infrastructure facilities provided by the tourism department will influence the growth of tourism in Kollam.

### **Data and Methodology Adopted for the Study**

This study is based on survey method. Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. This study confined to the local areas of Kollam District, Kerala. Primary data have been collected through questionnaire. A well structured questionnaire helped to make a direct interaction with the respondents. DTPC publications are referred to know about tourism development, programmes and activities.

### **Review of Literature**

Babu Paul (2001) The former Secretary of Tourism, Government of Kerala, in his paper entitled 'A Perspective Paper on Tourism Development in Kerala' sketched the profile of tourism in Kerala and brought out the constraints and prospects of tourism industry.

P.O.George (2004) conducted a research regarding tourism in Kerala. In his study “Management of Tourism Industry in Kerala” it was found that Kerala is a primary tourism destination. Majority of the tourists to Kerala, both domestic and international, are more interested in tourism product other than the cultural festival of Kerala.

A.P. Mohammed (2008) published “Challenges faced by Kerala tourism industry” DS space at IIMK; it is a comprehensive study covering the whole state. He explains high tax charged on food accommodation and luxury and improper waste management system, exploitation by the auto taxi drivers, inadequate guidance services are the major problems in the Kerala tourism sector.

Dr. T. Subhash (2015) in his research titled, “Tourism in India: Potential, Challenges and opportunities”, argued that, sector is facing the challenges such as lack of good quality tourism infrastructure, global concern regarding health and safety of tourists, disparate passengers, tax structure across various states and shortfall of adequate trained and skilled man power.

Manoj P.K. (2017) from Cochin University of Science and Technology in his journal “Impact of Ecotourism: Evidence from Thenmala Ecotourism destination Kollam district, Kerala” explains extremely large potential of tourism regarding economic development and employment generation.

**Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism**

The spiraling and pervasive COVID-19 pandemic has distorted the world’s

thriving economy in unpredictable and ambiguous terms. But it significantly indicated that the current downturn seems primarily different from recessions of the past which had jolted the country’s economic order. Whereas the nations, conglomerates, corporations and multinationals continue to understand the magnitude of the pandemic, it is undoubtedly the need of the hour to prepare for a future that is sustainable, structurally more viable for living and working. How-ever, every crisis brings about a unique opportunity to rethink on the path undertaken for the development of a human being, community and society. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a clear message for the Indian economy to adopt sustainable developmental models, which are based on self-reliance, inclusive frameworks and are environment friendly.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table 1**  
**Age Wise Classification**

Age	Respondents	Percentage
Below 15 years	15	15
15-36	33	33
37-55	32	32
Above 55	20	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	100

*Source: Primary Data*

Table 1 represents that most of the tourists who visits Kollam are between the age group of 15-36 years (33 per cent), immediately trailing by the age group of 37 - 55 years (32 per cent),

From Table 2 analysis we can understand that 90 per cent of tourists are Indians and the remaining 10 per cent are foreigners. Majority of the tourists are private employee that is 45 per cent (Table 3). 39 per cent of tourists belong to the

category of Government employee, 13 per cent of tourists belong to the category of self employed and 3 per cent are from others.

**Table 2**  
**Nationality of Tourist**

Nationality	Respondents	Percentage
Indian	90	90
Foreigner	10	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

**Table 3**  
**Occupation wise Classification**

Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
Self Employed	13	13
Government Employee	39	39
Private Employee	45	45
Others	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

**Table 4**  
**Purpose of Visit**

Purpose	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
LEISURE	55	55	30	30	5	5	5	5	5	5
EDUCATION	35	35	22	22	20	20	15	15	8	8
BUSINESS	30	30	35	35	10	10	15	15	10	10
HEALTH	40	40	25	25	10	10	15	15	10	10
OTHERS	20	20	26	26	18	18	18	18	18	18

*Source: Primary Data*

Majority of the tourists visited Kollam for leisure (55 per cent) followed by health purposes (40 per cent), educational purposes (35 per cent), business purposes (30 per cent) and 20 per cent for other purpose.

Majority of tourists use public transport for the purpose of travelling to Kollam (30 per cent)(Table 5). And others depend on railways and private transport.

**Table 5**  
**Mode of Conveyance**

Mode of Conveyance	Respondents	Percentage
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	30	30
RAILWAYS	25	25
PRIVATE TRANSPORT	25	25
OTHERS	20	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

**Table 6**  
**Places Visited in Kollam**

Places Visited	Respondents	Percentage
MUNROE ISLAND	17	17
KOLLAM BEACH	30	30
SAMBRANIKODI	3	3
THANGASSERI LIGHT HOUSE	15	15
THENMALA	20	20
PALARUVI	15	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

Majority of the tourists visited Kollam beach (30 per cent). 20 per cent of tourists visited Thenmala and 17 per cent of tourists visited Munroe Island. And the balance 15 per cent, 15 per cent and 3 per cent visited Thangasseri Light House, Palaruvi and Sambranikodi respectively.

**Table 7**

**Length of Stay in Kollam**

Length of Stay	Respondents	Percentage
1-2 days	50	50
2-5 days	15	15
5-7 days	25	25
7-10days	10	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary Data*

From this table it is interpreted that 50 per cent of tourists are willing to stay in Kollam for only 1-2 days, 25 per cent are willing to stay for 5-7days and 15 per cent are willing to stay for 7-10 days.

**Table 8**  
**Knowledge about Kollam**

Knowledge About Kollam	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
TRAVEL AGENCY	55	55	30	30	5	5	5	5	5	5
INTERNET	62	62	25	25	3	3	6	6	4	4
NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE	35	35	30	30	5	5	10	10	20	20
TRAVEL BROCHURES	32	32	22	22	13	13	18	18	15	15
FAMILY/FRIENDS	25	25	30	30	20	20	15	15	10	10

Source: Primary Data

From Table 8 it is clear 62 per cent of tourists have known about Kollam through internet and 55 per cent of tourists have known about Kollam through travel agency.35 per cent of tourists by newspaper/magazines, 32 per cent get to know about Kollam by travel brochures and the remaining 25 per cent through family/friends.

**Table 9**  
**Main Attractions in Kollam**

Attractions	Respondents	Percentage
BEACH TOURISM	30	30
BACKWATER TOURISM	45	45
ADVENTURE TOURISM	15	15
HEALTH TOURIM	5	5
PILGRIMAGE TOURISM	5	5
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Most of the tourists are attracted by the backwater tourism i.e., 45 per cent .30 per cent of tourists are attracted by the Beach tourism, 15 per cent tourists are attracted by the adventure tourism , 5 per cent are attracted by the health tourism , 5 per cent are interested in pilgrimage tourist.

Table 10 represents 28 per cent of tourists who visited Kollam rated good for the tourist destinations in Kollam.

**Table 10**  
**Tourist Rating Towards Kollam**

Ratings	Respondents	Percentage
POOR	16	16
FAIR	15	15
AVERAGE	20	20
GOOD	28	28
EXCELLENT	21	21
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

**Table 11**  
**Hygiene Rating**

Hygiene Rating	Respondents	Percentage
POOR	60	60
FAIR	10	10
AVERAGE	10	10
GOOD	15	15
EXCELLENT	5	5
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 11 shows that 60 per cent of tourists rated poor for the hygiene facilities offered by our district.

**Table 12**  
**Rating the Factors of Tourism**

Factors	Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dis-satisfied		Highly dis-satisfied	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
ACCOMODATION	40	40	25	25	5	5	15	15	15	15
FOOD AND BEVERAGE	52	52	26	26	8	8	9	9	5	5
TOURISM PACKAGES	50	50	30	30	2	2	8	8	10	10
TRANSPORTATION	30	30	31	31	9	9	13	13	17	17
BANKING	35	35	25	25	19	19	11	11	10	10

Source: Primary Data

From table 12, it is clear that 52 per cent of tourists are satisfied with food and beverages, 50 per cent of tourists are satisfied with tourism packages, 40 per cent of tourist are satisfied with the accommodation in Kollam.35 per cent of tourists are satisfied with the banking facilities and 30 per cent of tourists are satisfied with Banking.

**Table 13**  
Rate the following Factors offered by DTPC

Services	Poor		Average		Fair		Excellent	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
TOUR PACKAGES	19	19	21	21	49	49	11	11
DISCOUNTS, OFFERS AND DEALS	12	12	32	32	30	30	26	26
TOURIST GUIDES	10	10	35	35	40	40	15	15
AMENITIES	6	6	4	4	40	40	50	50

Source: Primary Data

Table 13 represents 50 per cent of tourists are satisfied with the amenities provided by the DTPC, 49 per cent of tourists are satisfied with the tour packages, 40 per cent of tourists are satisfied with the tourist guides, from the analysis the DTPC should provide better tour packages, offers, discounts etc.

**Table 14**  
Changes Needed in the Destination as per Your Opinion

Opinion	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
BETTER COMMUNICATION NETWORK	35	35	30	30	7	7	15	15	13	13
CLEANLINESS AND HYGIENE	60	60	25	25	3	3	8	8	4	4
INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES	45	45	28	28	8	8	10	10	9	9
BETTER TOUR PACKAGES	50	50	25	25	5	5	7	7	13	13
OFFERS AND DISCOUNTS	25	25	26	26	7	7	28	28	14	14

Source: Primary Data

Table 14 represents that 60 per cent of the tourist needs changes in cleanliness and hygiene factor, 50 per cent of the tourist needs better tour packages, 45 per cent of tourist needs better infrastructure facilities, 35 per cent needs better communication network and the remaining 25 per cent of tourist focuses on offers and discounts.

**Table 15**  
Factors that Contribute to Economic Development of Tourism

Factors	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	60	60	25	25	3	3	8	8	4	4
FOREIGN EXCHANGE	35	35	25	25	10	10	17	17	13	13
DIVERSIFICATION	28	28	38	38	12	12	13	13	9	9
STANDARD OF LIVING	55	55	26	26	9	9	7	7	3	3
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	45	45	25	25	10	10	17	17	3	3

Source: Primary Data

It is interpreted from the above table that 60 per cent of tourists strongly agreed that employment opportunities in Tourism sector will leads to economic development, 55 per cent of tourists agreed with standard of living will contribute to economic development. And the third factor is infrastructure development.

**Table 16**  
Satisfaction Level of Tourist

Satisfaction Level	Respondents	Percentage
HIGHLY SATISFIED	38	38
SATISFIED	49	49
NEUTRAL	4	4
DISSATISFIED	5	5
HIGHLY DISSATISFIED	4	4

Source: Primary Data

It is clear that 38 per cent of the tourist is highly satisfied with the Kollam tourism.

**Findings, Suggestions and Conclusions**

The analysis of the study revealed that Kollam tourism is a growing sector in Kerala. The natural resources help the development of Kollam as a prominent tourism destination. But these resources

are not properly utilised the government should find more policies and programmes to promote tourism in Kollam.

From the study, it is revealed that majority of the tourist visited Kollam are within the age group of 15-36 years and the tourists who frequently visited Kollam were domestic tourists. The purpose of the tourist who visited Kollam is for leisure. Majority of the tourists choose public transport as the mode of conveyance to visit Kollam. Majority of the tourist visited Kollam are private employees. Majority of the tourists have frequently visited Kollam Beach.

Tourist are willing to stay in Kollam for only 1-2 day .The traveller's choose on shorter length of stay. The backwater tourism attracts more tourists to visit Kollam. The Kettuvallams in the backwater are one of the prominent tourist attractions.

Majority of the tourist are not satisfied with the hygiene factors which prevents tourists to visit Kollam. Cleanliness and proper hygiene are the basic factor of tourism.

Tourists are satisfied with the food and beverage factors, accommodation. And they accept that the expenses incurred for the journey is worth. Majority of the tourists are satisfied with the services offered by DTPC.

Tourism drives economic prosperity and sustained development. Tourism is a very productive activity both for the tourist and the government .The government coordinates campaigns to promote 'Incredible India'. Some of the suggestions include:

- Backwater tourism should be utilized properly. Introduce variety of water activities in Kollam Beach to attract tourist and at the same time ensure more safety measures in Kollam Beach and Pallaruvi waterfalls. Take more initiative towards protection and preservation of our backwater.
- Develop the quality of services provided in all sectors of tourism. Health tourism and its promotions should be properly utilized. Eco-friendly tourism should be promoted.  
And Infrastructure facilities should be improved
- Develop the quality of the network coverage and data speed in the area. Introduce more blogs or brochures to know the activities in the tourist place.
- Ensure hygiene which is the major drawback faced by Kollam tourism. Cleanliness and proper hygiene are the basic factor of tourism.
- The services offered by the tourist promotions council should be improved. The government should adopt better policies and programmes to promote tourism. Local self government should provide better policies to promote tourism. The tourism promotions council should provide better facilities and packages with affordable rate.
- The authorities should develop adventure activities in sea and backwaters thereby increasing adventure tourism in Kollam district.

- The Tourism sector can conduct events and exhibitions to attract larger audience.

The government should adopt better policies to preserve historical monuments.

- We should emphasise on 'Aditi Devo Bhava' to promote tourism.

Kollam tourism is a growing tourism sector in the state of Kerala. Kollam is famous for its backwater beauty. The natural resources help the development of Kollam as a prominent tourism destination. But these resources are not properly utilised the government should find more policies and programmes to promote tourism in Kollam. From this study we can find out that backwater tourism are the backbone of the Kollam tourism and the government should provide better facilities in backwater

tourism. The tourism promotion council should provide a better tour packages and brochures to help the tourist order to know the activities of the destination in Kollam.

The tradition and culture of Kollam paves a new way for attracting more tourists and thereby increasing economic development and employment opportunities in Kollam. As per the study Kollam has great possibilities to become a prominent tourism destination and eye catching tourism destination in Kerala. The government should provide better policies in order to improve the hygiene of the Kollam city. During the pandemic period many industries faced a number of problems and the tourism industry is the one among them. From the study we can conclude that Kollam tourism will have a massive impact and has great possibilities to become a prominent tourism destination.

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